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Ministry of Education

NEW, ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY SCHOOL BREAKS GROUND

SAANICH – Saanich North and the Islands MLA Murray Coell today joined the Saanich school board, district staff and community leaders at a groundbreaking to officially begin construction at the new, eco-friendly KELSET elementary school.

"Today, the three environmental 'R's': reduce, re-use and recycle should be as fundamental as the traditional reading, writing and arithmetic," said Coell. "We have a duty to educate our children on how to preserve the environment and our government is leading by example with environmentally friendly designs and construction practices."

The new school on Forest Park drive is expected to open in September 2008 and will lessen its impact on the environment by including several measures:

- A building design based on sustainable design principles;
- An anti-idling policy;
- Fresh air circulation through the classrooms;
- A plan to replace lost forest and bush habitat for wildlife; and
- Site drainage that runs away from the adjacent organic farm.

"This project is an excellent example of how the Province, school boards and school communities are working together to protect our beautiful province," said Education Minister Shirley Bond. "This is one of the many steps we are taking to reduce our impact on the environment."

The name KELSET represents the waters below the new school and is a historical reference to a time when canoes were brought ashore for bailing following ocean-going journeys. KELSET provides a balance of reference to the geographical area and respect for First Nations history on the Saanich Peninsula. The school board chose the name from three presented by the new school steering committee, which worked closely with the communities of the two schools being consolidated and the Saanich First Nation elders.

Sustainable site practices are being integrated into the project, including the use of permeable paving and strict sediment control during construction. The school will be constructed using materials that minimize environmental impact and optimize use of locally produced goods. These design and construction practices support the government's election platform and throne speech commitments to take action on climate change.

"The school district and the Saanich and McTavish elementary school communities are pleased to break ground on this new school, which is a green design built to high environmental standards," said MaryLynne Rimer, chair of the Saanich school board. "The new school will be a state-of-the-art learning facility with a First Nations cultural centre, up-to-date computer systems and close proximity to a recreation centre."

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Since 2001, the Province has spent over $1 billion to complete 26 new schools, 32 replacements, 140 additions and 22 renovations projects across British Columbia. By the end of 2008-09, the Province will have invested more than $2.8 billion in school capital and maintenance projects.

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